



CITY OF ROANOKE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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February 21, 2006

Honorable C. Nelson Harris, Mayor
Honorable Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr., Vice Mayor
Honorable M. Rupert Cutler, Council Member
Honorable Alfred T. Dowe, Jr., Council Member
Honorable Sherman P. Lea, Council Member
Honorable Brenda L. McDaniel, Council Member
Honorable Brian J. Wishneff, Council Member

Dear Mayor Harris and Members of City Council:

**Subject: Interstate 81 Corridor
Improvement Study**

Background:

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) recently published the Interstate 81 (I-81) Corridor Improvement Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Tier 1 DEIS) and is seeking public comments at this time. The streamlined Tier 1 DEIS process being conducted in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) guidelines, identifies needs, develops solutions, and evaluates potential impacts associated with conceptual-level improvements along the entire 325-mile Interstate 81 (I-81) corridor in Virginia, as well as improvements to Norfolk Southern's Shenandoah and Piedmont rail lines in Virginia. The potential impacts of specific improvements will be analyzed in greater detail during Tier 2 if a "Build" concept (or portion of a "Build" concept) is advanced. The Tier 1 study documents existing and future needs along the corridor. Upon completion of the Tier 1 study, decisions will be made on:

- the improvement concepts for highway and rail facilities;
- advancing I-81 as a toll pilot under Section 1216(b) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21);
- projects with independent utility and logical termini to be studied in Tier 2;
- the types of Tier 2 NEPA document(s);
- the location of the corridor for studying alignments in Tier 2; and
- possible purchase of certain right-of-way parcels on a case-by-case basis.

Recommended Action:

City staff has reviewed the published DEIS information and recommends Council adoption and submission of the attached resolution in support of the multi-modal Interstate 81 corridor improvements.

Respectfully submitted,



Darlene L. Burcham
City Manager

DLB/KHK/gpe

c: Mary F. Parker, City Clerk
William M. Hackworth, City Attorney
Jesse A. Hall, Director of Finance
Robert K. Bengtson, P.E., Director of Public Works
Kenneth H. King, P.E., Manager, Division of Transportation

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